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SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 23 July 1992 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, the reply of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, H.E. Mr. Vladislav Jovanovic, to the letters of 7 and 11 July 1992 addressed to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, concerning the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Reply of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the letters dated 7 and 11 July 1992 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, concerning the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In connection with unfounded and false accusations of the interference of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contained in the letters of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt dated 7 and 11 July 1992, I wish to point to the following:

As is known, a civil war is raging in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the participation of armed forces of all three constituent peoples of this Republic - Muslims, Serbs and Croats. We recall that as of 19 May 1992 there has been no member of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that the armed forces have carried out no military activities in or against Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia fully abides by Security Council resolutions 752 and 757 and has persistently called on all parties in conflict, including the Serb side, to cease hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to enable delivery of humanitarian aid and to begin negotiations in order to find a lasting political solution to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia resolutely rejects the accusation of the involvement of its authorities in the alleged expulsion by force of the population from Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of its nationality and religion, including a large number of Muslims.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia deeply deplores the news of the sufferings of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are strongly committed to the cessation of hostilities and enabling the refugees to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We therefore cannot understand why the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is being blamed for the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and why a solution is sought only in the withdrawal of the "Serb forces from Bosnia and Herzegovina". We have to reiterate also on this occasion that Bosnian Serbs are a people indigenous to Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of its three constituent peoples, accounting for 31.4 per cent of the overall population (Muslims 43.7 per cent, Croats 17.3 per cent and others 7.6 per cent). Consequently, these Serbs have nowhere to "withdraw" to. Insistence on their "withdrawal from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina" is therefore tantamount to a request that they be expelled from their ancestral homeland.

In order to create conditions for the solution of the problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, pressure should be brought to bear also on Croatia, whose armed forces are engaged in an overt military intervention and annexation of

parts of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on the Muslim side to agree to negotiations for a political settlement of the crisis.

For its part, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has on several occasions expressed its readiness to accept the deployment of United Nations observers along its borders with Bosnia and Herzegovina and at its airports so as to give proof to the world public that the armed forces and Air Force of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are not engaged in the activities repeatedly attributed to them.

As the letters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt contain accusations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, particularly concerning the treatment of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, I wish to point out that because of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, over 134,000 persons - one fourth of them Muslims - have taken refuge in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Like all other displaced persons, Muslims were received by the Red Cross and accommodated throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The persons of Muslim or Serbian nationality from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina who decided of their own will to travel abroad and who possessed no personal documents were issued, under Article 20 of the Law on Travel Documents, valid Yugoslav passports. In that way, a number of displaced persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina left willingly for Macedonia, Turkey, Hungary, Austria or Germany, with the possibility to return to the country at a time of their own choosing.

In view of the fact that some United Nations Member States have abused the case of the group of 1,880 persons of Muslim nationality from Zvornik (Bosnia and Herzegovina) who were accommodated in Subotica, accusing Yugoslavia for the expulsion of those persons from its territory, I wish to point out that the persons in question explicitly stated that, because of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they wanted to go abroad and that their destination was Austria and Germany. Relevant records thereon are kept in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In this context, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Belgrade suggested that Yugoslav passports be issued to those persons individually, as they are issued to all other citizens, because of the likelihood that similar cases would appear also in the future. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia issued the passports to all persons in the group of 1,880 Muslims, whereupon they all, of their own will, left the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

As fresh waves of refugees and displaced persons keep coming from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, problems related to their travel to other countries are to be expected in the future. This all the more so, since the growing number of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina on their way to Western European and neighbouring countries has led some of those countries to change

their visa regimes and to refuse to accept, i.e. to begin to return, the refugees from their borders (Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary). The Yugoslav Government will, as in the past, make every effort to solve all the problems related to their status, their stay in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and their requests to go to other countries with the assistance and cooperation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.